Resume Guidelines

A resume is similar to a company promotional brochure. It must tell the reader (e.g., an employer) why you might be a solution for what they need. If you are making a career transition at an executive level or from one employer where you have more than ten years of experience, your resume must focus the reader's attention on the functional position you want and highlight your achievements by demonstrating the skills and experience that reinforce your qualifications for that position.

By combining the best features of a functional resume format with the chronological resume format, you can create a powerful resume that answers the following three questions the reader (e.g., an employer) will want to know about you:

1. **What type or kind of position are you looking to find?** Keep in mind that employers hire people to perform functions *they* want someone to do.

    Focus on what you want as specifically as possible so the reader understands how you might fit, and at what level, within their organization (e.g., sales, finance, HR, operations, executive, director, management, senior management, etc.).

2. **What are your skills and experience?** The reader needs to assess whether your best skills and experience are what *they* want.

    Identify what you believe are your best skills. List only your top three. Focus more on transferable functional experience rather than on industry experience, unless your industry experience is key to the position you want.

3. **What is the extent and level of your skills or experience?** The reader wants to hear your achievements that demonstrate your skills and experience with some measure of magnitude.

    The reader may not remember your name or your top three skills and experience but they will remember your achievement stories that demonstrate your skills, experience, and qualifications.

Once you have focused their attention on what you bring to the table, you can then use the chronological format so the reader can understand your past work, education and other capabilities.

How do you verbally tell people what you say in your resume?

The resume example on the following pages illustrates how to prepare your resume. The information you include on the first half of the first page is the most critical part of your resume (1, 2 and 3 above) because it will be the language you should use when you are networking. I call that your Verbal Business Card. Others might call it your "Elevator pitch."

Your resume and your verbal business card must be clear and consistent about what you want and what you bring to the table. Be factual and let the listener apply judgment about your ability to adapt to different situations and even a different industry. Connect the dots for a different industry if you think it is appropriate but, remember, they are the only ones that will make that judgment.

Your resume should include the following information in the sequence listed. The numbers refer to the example on the next page.

❶ Who are you, where do you live, and how do I contact you?

❷ What do you want?

Describe the *position* you want, *industry* or *business*, and *location* where you want to work (if it needs clarification). Be as specific as possible. Make sure that your stated objective is consistent with what you verbally tell others when they ask you what position you are looking to find.

❸ What do you bring to the table?

Companies hire executives and others in senior-level positions for their skills and experience. To focus on yours, make two sections: one that says what you are best at doing (your key skills) and one that demonstrates it (achievements or career highlights that demonstrate your key skills).

♦ *Key Skills*: List only **_your top three_** skills. If you list more, you increase the risk that readers will skip reading this section, thereby losing your opportunity to focus their attention on what you are best at doing.

♦ *Achievements*: Achievement stories are critical because they are credible and memorable, and they *demonstrate* your skills. The Key Skills and the Achievements (or Accomplishments) sections must be consistent with each other. Use bullet points and list **_no more than three_**.

❹ What is your work history?

♦ Recruiters and employers will examine your career path, looking for a logical career progression. If it isn't there, you might want to cover that subject in a cover letter. List your most recent employer first. Start with the employer's name and location, followed by your most recent position. Show the beginning and ending **_month_** and **_year_** for each position held. If the industry is not readily apparent by the company's name, describe the industry and the company's size.

♦ Do not represent your most recent employer as your "current" employer. If your prior employment has ended and you are in transition, indicate when your last employment ended.

♦ Show periods of self-employment separately. See example on following page.

♦ If you choose, you **_may_** briefly summarize employment more than 10 years earlier by listing the employer, the highest position you attained, and the dates of employment (Here you can limit the dates to year only).

❺ What are your educational qualifications?

List university degrees and technical certifications. Do *not* include company training or non-academic classes unless they resulted in an industry-recognized certificate of technical proficiency.

❻ What else is important about you for the position you want?

Include other skills (e.g., foreign language proficiency) or involvement in activities that would be of interest to a prospective employer and are clearly relevant to the position you are seeking or the industry in which you want to work. Do not list sports, hobbies, or any organization that implies a religious, political, racial, or ethnic connection, unless that involvement would enhance your prospects with the employer or person reading your resume. Omit age, marital status, children, health, reference to referrals, or anything else that is not employment related.

Resume example (First page)

Use 12 pt type for your name and 9 - 10 pt for address and contact details. Use 12 pt for resume headers and text.

Shirley Thomas ❶
Silicon Valley, CA 90340
Cell: 909-555-1254
Email: sthomas@legacy.com

For illustration only. Do not use a border on your resume.

Or "CAREER OBJECTIVE" Use one short paragraph!

EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE ❷
A CTO/VP of Technology position in a well-financed, fast-growing, eCommerce company with a team-oriented culture.

Or "CAPABILITIES" Use no more than three bullets.

KEY SKILLS ❸
- Developing technology to solve strategic business problems
- Architecting systems
- Developing software products and Web-based operations

Or "ACCOMPLISHMENTS" or "CAREER HIGHLIGHTS" Use no more than three.

ACHIEVEMENTS ❸
- Created the software "Office Assistant" concept and implemented it in Microsoft Windows.
- Managed a team that built a complex supply chain communications infrastructure and an exchange in one month. Delivered the production software running on in-house Web servers in another two months, on time and on budget. Product accounts for 30% of the company's sales.
- Hired a permanent staff of 25 technical people (Developers, QA, and Network Administrators) for a new dot com startup in less than three months, despite today's highly competitive job market.

Or EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE or PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, etc.

WORK EXPERIENCE ❹
BizTrade.com, Eureka, CA - Chief Technology Officer (CTO)   **Mar 2018 - Present**
Offered the CTO position after a short consultancy period for this B2B supply chain services startup. As a part of the executive team, took the company from an idea to a Web-based ASP with 75 employees. Managed the technology development, including software, hardware, communications, infrastructure, vendors, and 27 technical people, as well as being prominent in planning, budgeting, recruiting, and mentoring. Managed ASP, HTML, VB COM+, SQL Server, Java, and Oracle technology-based custom software development teams and vendors.

Macro Discovery, Las Vegas, NV - President and Owner   **Jan 2016 - Feb 2018**
Started a custom software development and consultancy firm, including Internet development. Projects included automated commodity trading systems, NBA, NFL, MLB, NHL, and MLS game blackouts, 401K Administration Systems, Email, Workflow, and Imaging Systems. Clients ranged from small companies to large corporations (PurchasingPower.com, Ford Motor Co., BMW, and NorthStar Motors) on projects varying from 2 months to 2 years, using technologies such as C++, MFC, SQL, Visual Basic, ODBC, SQL Server, Access, HTML, CGI, OLE Automation, COM/DCOM, and Active X Controls.

NorthStar Motors, Detroit, MI - Software Specialist and Project Manager   **Jan 2011 - Dec 2015**
Developed a Windows-and-Unix-based National Automated Electronic Software Distribution and Installation product, which earned a patent. Managed four developers. Enhanced the installation programs for NorthStar Advantage EX, an inventory management information system. Used C & C++ and MFC.

Executive resume example (Second page)

Shirley Thomas
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> *Put your name and a page number in a header so it will always appear at the top of the second page.*

DMJW, Chicago, IL – Director of Software Development   **Jan 2008 - Dec 2010**
Directed the company's entire software development effort from concept to delivery, including recruiting, planning, and budgeting. Managed seven programmers. Presented the product overview and vision for large customers. Developed multi-platform networked multimedia products running on Windows 3.0, Macintosh, and Unix environments, using C++, SQL, SMALLTALK, XVT, and TCP/IP.

BMW, Advanced R&D, Chicago, IL–Sr. Programmer and Software Architect Jul 2006 - Jan 2008
Designed and implemented a front-end newsletter layout and publishing graphics workstation on 386-PCs, using C++. Invented a unique graphical tool for formatting and manipulating feature story layouts.

Xerox Corporation, Mountain, NJ – Senior Programmer   **Mar 2004 - Jun 2006**
Developed the Interpress Programmer's Library, Diablo 630 & Xerox 2700 to Interpress converters, as well as an Interpress printer driver for Microsoft Word in C/MSDOS. Co-designed the Arabic & Hebrew bi-directional multi-language text-handling for Xerox workstations (in MESA). Designed various algorithms to handle the never-before-discovered problems of computerized bi-directional text. Implemented the floating accents for the Xerox Star Word Processor.

DOD, Washington, DC – Research Scientist   **Jan 2003 - Feb 2004**
Developed a full screen bi-directional Arabic & English text editor and a device-independent text formatter. Built bilingual system utility programs for a custom built CP/M environment (in C and ASSEMBLER).

George Washington University, Washington, DC – Graduate Teaching Fellow   **2000 – 2004**
Taught graduate and undergraduate Digital Computer Design courses. Created a CP/M compatible operating system for slave Z80 computers, MP/M interface, program transfer, and execution utilities for a multi-processor system (in Z80-ASSEMBLER).

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS ❺
MBA in Business Management, Northwestern University, 2010
M.Sc. in Computer Science, George Washington University, 2000
B.Sc. in Electronic Communications Engineering, University of Pennsylvania, 1998

TEACHING EXPERIENCE ❻
- "Information Technology and Computer Programming," Michigan State University, 2011 – 2013
- "Computer Design and Computer Programming," George Washington University, 2000 – 2004

For more detailed job and career search help for executives and others at senior-level positions:
- Go to www.ExecGlobalNet.com.
- Purchase *12 Steps to a New Career* available on Amazon and Barnes and Noble.